

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media contacts:

Trip Jennings, Portland Rising Tide - [tripjennings1@gmail.com](mailto:tripjennings1@gmail.com) - 541.729.3294

David Osborn, Portland Rising Tide - [david@portlandrisingtide.org](mailto:david@portlandrisingtide.org) - 503.516.8932

15 ACTIVISTS ARRAIGNED, TOTAL BAIL SET AT \$ 150,000 FOLLOWING BLOCKADE OF TAR SANDS MEGALOAD MONDAY

**John Day, OR:** The people arrested Monday night blockading the tar sands megaload were arraigned today in the Justice Court of Grant County. Fourteen were charged with five misdemeanors, one with six and the minor arrested in the action was released Monday. Each person has had bail set at \$ 10,000 for a total of \$ 150,000. The arrests stem from the two blockades that were set up Monday night using two disabled vehicles to stop the controversial, 450-ton, 376-foot long tar sands megaload transported by Omega Morgan, which was delayed for several hours.

The action Monday was the sixth regional action against the Oregon megaloads in two weeks. The actions started when two were arrested successfully preventing the megaload from leaving the Port of Umatilla on December 1st. A member of the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla was arrested December 2nd trying to block the megaload. Office occupations and disruptions have taken place at Omega Morgan's offices in Fife, WA and Hillsboro, OR, as well as the General Electric subsidiary that designed the machinery moving towards the Athabasca oil fields in Alberta.

Those arrested Monday included support personal not involved in the action. Of those arrested 12 were not involved in the blockade and were standing on the side of the road to take photographs, document the police response and provide medical assistance if needed. They were not given cease and desist orders, nor told to leave by the police prior to being arrested. Police also used violence on the individuals that were part of the blockade in an attempt to coerce them into unlocking themselves.

"I was away from the actual blockades and present to support the people taking action. I was arrested without warning and charged with the same thing as those who locked down", said Johnathan Batchelor who was arrested, "This aggravated and inappropriate response is the opposite of what is needed. The real criminals are Omega Morgan and the companies involved in the tar sands which fuel the climate crisis".

Omega Morgan says this is the first of three megaload shipments through the region. Former routes through Idaho were blocked by an injunction filed by the Nez Perce Tribe, following major protests in Idaho and Montana. Similar opposition from the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla is growing in Oregon and Gary Burke, Chair of the Umatilla Reservation's Board of Trustees, recently delivered a letter to Governor Kitzhaber expressing opposition to the megaloads due to lack of consultation with the tribes and the role of tar sands extraction in harming indigenous people and fueling global climate change.

Portland Rising Tide, a member of an alliance of groups organizing against the megaloads, continues to mobilize support for ongoing opposition to these and any future megaloads. During the summer some 400 people signed a pledge expressing willingness to participate in non-violent civil disobedience and direct action to address the climate crisis. "We will continue to resist the tar sands megaloads and all other fossil fuel infrastructure, including the oil, coal and gas terminals proposed for the NW, " said David Osborn of

Portland Rising Tide, "All new fossil fuel extraction must be halted, communities are being destroyed and the climate is being imperiled. The equipment transported by Omega Morgan will expand the tar sands and devastate communities in northern Alberta and throughout the world. It is immoral and we will do everything we can to stop it."

Photos available from freelance journalist Alex Milan Tracy of December 1st and 12th actions:

<http://www.demotix.com/news/3398176/activists-prevent-megaload-bound-tar-sands-leaving-umatilla#media-3398116>

<http://www.demotix.com/news/3487848/omega-morgan-closes-after-tar-sands-protesters-enter-facility>

Photos of Monday's action will be forthcoming when the cameras are released by the Grant County police.

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